6: Gazetteer G-5 (ca. 1840-1883) 1883-4 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

British assessment of Láhaul.

Mr. Barnes thus describes the assessment he made at the Regular Settlement:—

"The revenue assessed upon this tract was fixed entirely with reference to the trading pursuits of the inhabitants and the pastoral qualities of the country. The soil does not yield sufficient produce to maintain the people, much less to pay a land-tax. The *jama* levied by our predecessors and maintained at the Summary Settlement contained two items which, had they been ascertained at the time, would have been at once remitted. One was a demand of Rs. 500 annually for *firshi*, or fines, which the people had to bear as an additional burden, and to distribute it as they best could among themselves. The second item was also for Rs. 500 on account of grazing dues exacted from the owners of sheep who resorted to Láhaul in the rainy season, as that region, being across the snowy range, is beyond the reach of the periodical monsoons. This revenue would be legitimate enough, only the graziers were residents of our own territory, who during the winter months had already paid a grazing tax of Rs. 2-8-0 per 100 head in the valleys of Kángra. It would not be fair to make these flocks pay double rates, and, as the tax could be collected with greater facility in Kángra than in Láhaul, I determined to remit this item also. Still the balance which devolved upon the inhabitants of Láhaul pressed heavily upon them. The trade, moreover, had become greatly depreciated. The wool and produce of Ladákh were diverted by order of Mahárája Gúlab Singh to routes which led through his own country; for by their passage through our territory the Mahárája lost the opportunity of exacting transit tolls, and our accession had thrown open the carrying trade to any speculator who chose to venture under the rule of our predecessors; the fear of plunder, and the exactions of the Customs Officers, left the trade entirely in the hands of the Láhaulis. On these considerations I determined to reduce the assessment in Láhaul, and I was fortified in this conclusion by the concurrent testimony of travellers, such as Captain A. Cunningham and Captain William Hay, Assistant Commissioner, regarding the poverty of the country and the destitute condition of the inhabitants. The Summary Settlement was fixed originally at Rs. 4,200, but this was lowered the second year on the urgent remonstrance of the people to Rs. 3,200; and finally at the revised Settlement I considered an annual *jama* of Rs. 2,200 as much as the *taláks* could bear."

Nature of rent or land-tax under the Rájas in Spiti.

According to Major Hay, the king or Giálpo of Ladákh prior to 1839 took as revenue for Spiti Rs. 396 cash, 200 *khals* or *lákh* or grain, 100 *mandis* or iron crow-bars, 34 pieces of Barmaur cloth, and 132 reams (*shúgu*) of paper. The crow-bars, or the iron to make them, came from Basáhir and were paid for out of a common fund; the other manufactured articles can be made in every house in the country. The paper is made from the fibre of a small plant or grass which grows wild in abundance. The cloth is of very close texture and very lasting. Spiti also paid a tribute of trifling amount to the Rájas of Basáhir and Kúlu, not in recognition in any sense of their sovereignty, but for the privilege of free access for trading purposes. Major Hay's account is, no doubt, generally accurate, but there are some mistakes in it, principally with regard to the grain revenue, the nature of which he does not appear to have fully understood. Each holding was assessed with a fixed number of measures of grain.